Numerous fora have been held in the past to discuss issues related to orbital debris. However, this first of its kind conference, co-hosted by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), will bring government and industry together to address the issues and challenges involved with removing manmade orbital debris from Earth orbit.

Call for Presentations

Attendees wishing to present an appropriate technical or scholarly briefing consistent with the conference topics may submit a 250 word abstract in English via e-mail to the selection committee at: orbitaldebrisconference@darpa.mil. Submissions must be received by October 30, 2009, and include a title and the author’s name and affiliation. If your abstract is selected for presentation you will be asked to submit a full presentation prior to November 30, 2009.

Registration

Register on-line prior to November 23, 2009 at https://www.enstg.com/signup. Enter code: INT11415

A $300 (USD) conference fee applies. Registration includes:

- Attendance at the two-and-a-half day conference
- Continental breakfast each morning
- Luncheons Tuesday & Wednesday

Hotel reservations can be made at the conference location while rooms last:

Westfields Marriott
14750 Conference Center Drive
Chantilly, VA 20151
Phone: 800-635-5666 (Reference: Orbital Debris Removal)
Or online at: http://www.westfieldsmarriott.com

Group code: CODCODA
Room rate for conference attendees is $149 (USD).
The Growing Risk from Orbital Debris

Since the advent of the space age, more than thirty-five thousand man-made objects have been cataloged by the U.S. Space Surveillance Network. Nearly fifteen thousand of those objects remain in orbit today, ninety-four percent of which are non-functioning orbital debris. These figures do not include the hundreds of thousands of objects too small to be cataloged, but still large enough to pose a threat to operational satellites in orbit around the Earth. In addition, collisions between orbital objects could potentially lead to a continuously growing debris population, thus further increasing the risk to operational satellites.

For several years space-faring nations have recognized the mounting risk posed by orbital debris. Mitigation measures to minimize the generation of debris, such as limiting debris released during normal operations, minimizing the potential for on-orbit breakups, and planning for post mission disposal, have been adopted by many countries in an attempt to slow the growth of the orbital debris population, with some success. However, current analysis and two recent, significant debris-generating events indicate that debris mitigation alone will not be sufficient to prevent continued growth of the debris population.

Several studies and lab experiments on debris removal have been conducted over the past several years. However, only now have technology and an operational imperative come together to make debris removal a realistic international objective.

International Conference on Orbital Debris Removal
December 8-10, 2009

Location: Westfields Marriott, Chantilly, VA, USA. Conveniently located just 8 miles (13 km) from Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD).

Topics: Topics covered during the two-and-a-half day conference will include:

- Understanding the orbital debris problem, including growth projections and risk assessments
- Debris tracking
- Ground-based removal concepts and technologies
- Small debris (fragments) removal concepts and technologies
- Large debris (spacecraft and rocket bodies) removal concepts and technologies
- Solutions appropriate for Low Earth Orbit (LEO)
- Solutions appropriate for Geostationary Earth Orbit (GEO)
- International policy and cooperation requirements
- Safety issues and other risks
- Legal and economic issues – constraints and incentives

Keynote Speakers: Bryan O’Connor, NASA’s Chief of Safety and Mission Assurance (confirmed) and Nicholas Johnson, NASA’s Chief Scientist for Orbital Debris (confirmed), will provide NASA’s perspective on debris removal. Heiner Klinkrad, head of the European Space Operations Centre’s Space Debris Office (confirmed) will provide ESA’s perspective on orbital debris.